LPTs/VLPTs in Kerala

646. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Low Power Transmitter was sanctioned at Pala and Very Low Power Transmitter (VLPT) were sanctioned in Erattupeta and Mundakkayam in Kottayam District of Kerala; and

(b) if so, the present stage of the Projects and steps taken to implement these projects?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRIMATI. SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The sites for setting up of Low Power TV Transmitter (LPT) at Pala and the Very Low Power TV Transmitter (VLPT) at Erattupeta are being identified and completion of these LPT/VLPT project will take about one to two years time subject to availability of resources, and other infrastructural facilities.

Development of Ports

647 SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal of the Kerala Government regarding the development of Azhikkal/Beypore/ Vizhinham ports is pending with the Union Government for the Central assistance on the recommendation of the working group constituted by the Ministry in 1992; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) and (b) The proposal received from Kerala Government was incomplete and therefore could not be considered for Central assistance.

Licence Fees for Basic and Cellular Services

648. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the licence fee quoted for basic and Cellular services are unrealistic and higher; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to reduce it to allow the projects to take off?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) : (a) The bidders for both Basic and Cellular services themselves quoted the licence fee for various Telecom Circles in a competitive bidding process, after assessing the demand for these services.

(b) The operator's Associations have represented about the poor health of both Cellular and Basic service industry and have requested for certain financial reliefs. Bureau of Industrial Cost & Prices (BICP) has been requested to carry out a techno-economic study of cellular service industry. Their report is awaited.

[Translation]

Licences to IITL Mumbai

649. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (V.S.N.L) has paid Rs. 50 crore to the Iridium India Telecom Limited (IITL) located at Mumbai in the last October but the Department of Telecommunications has not issued licences to the IITL so far;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for making payment in advance for the procurement of equipments;

(d) whether the matter has been inquired and the officials responsible for adopting lackadaisical approach in the matter have been identified and the punishment awarded to them for the same; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) VSNL has made a secured advance payment of Rs. 50 crores to Iridium India Telecom Ltd. for purchase of the gateway equipment after obtaining approval from VSNL Board and after entering into MOU with IITL.

(c) to (e) The matter is being looked into. It is not possible to comment at this stage.

[English]

Funds Release for National Highways

650. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the amount released to different States for National Highways during last three years;

(b) the amount utilised by various States during the corresponding period;

(c) the amount demanded by the Government of Assam for National Highways of the States for the current year; and

(d) the time by which the work of National Highway No. 36 between Doboka and Dimapur could be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) The amount released to different States for National Highways during last three years is given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) No funds have been surrendered by any of the States during these years.

(c) An Amount of Rs. 28.45 crore has been demanded by the Assam Government for the current year.

(d) The works on NH. 36 between Doboka and Dimapur are likely to be completed by March, 1999.

Statement

Funds Released for National Highways

(Rs. in lakhs)

No.	State/U.Ts	1995-96 Allotment	1996-97 Allotment	1997-98 Allotment
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2100.00	2100.00	2949.83
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Assam	1650.00	1212.00	1821.00
4.	Bihar	1600.00	1400.00	1900.00
5.	Chandigarh	25.00	24.00	30.00
6.	Delhi	400.00	400.00	800.00
7.	Goa	500.00	700.00	900.00
8.	Gujarat	3398.00	2933.00	3675.00
9.	Haryana	1000.00	800.00	1100.00
10.	Himachal Pradesh	1600.00	1200.00	1700.00
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	50.00	100.00	150.00
12.	Karnataka	1400.00	1900.00	2900.00
13.	Kerala	2100.00	2500.00	3600.00
14.	Madhya Pradesh	2000.00	1000.00	1700.00
15.	Maharashtra	2859.00	1900.00	2900.00
16.	Manipur	500.00	360.00	700.00
17.	Meghalaya	600.00	900.00	920.00
18.	Nagaland	50.00	10.00	100.00
19.	Orissa	1300.00	1750.00	2600.00
20.	Pondicherry	50.00	10.00	70.00
21.	Punjab	1000.00	1200.00	1300.00
22.	Rajasthan	2400.00	1850.00	2550.00
23.	Tamil Nadu	1000.00	1905.00	2500.00
24.	Uttar Pradesh	3400.00	3000.00	4608.00
25.	West Bengal	2200.00	3573.00	5375.00
		33182.00	32767.00	46848.00

Demand and Supply of Power in N.E. States

651. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the gap between demand and supply of power in the N.E. States continues to exist;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken so far to bridge this gap; and

(d) the extent to which these steps improved the power situation in these States?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) State-wise power supply position in the North-Eastern States during 1997-98 is given below:

(Figures in MU net)

Name of the State	Requirement	Availability	Shortage	%
Arunachal Pradesh	144.30	115.30	29.00	20.1
Assam	2987.30	2727.50	259.80	8.7
Manipur	511.60	404.70	106.90	20.9
Meghalaya	413.00	425.80	(+) 12.80	(+) 3.10
Mizoram	214.90	153.20	61.70	28.70
Nagaland	213.90	159.50	54.40	25.40
Tripura	511.30	439.00	72.32	14.10
Total (N.E.R.)	4996.30	4425.00	571.30	11.40

(c) Various measures taken to improve the availability of power in North-Eastern States include— (i) coordinated and optimal utilisation of existing generating capacity; (ii) promotion of bilateral exchange between surplus States and deficit States of the region; (iii) allocation of 100 MW power to Assam from the unallocated output of NTPC stations located in the neighbouring Eastern region. Three units of 21 MW each have been commissioned at Agartala Gas Power Station of NEEPCO which helped in reducing the gap between demand and supply.

Besides above, the various executing agencies are taking necessary steps for expeditious completion of ongoing generation and transmission/distribution projects of State and Central Sector.

(d) The above steps have resulted in reducing the overall energy shortage for the North-Eastern Region as a whole from 12.6% during 1996-97 to 11.4% during 1997-98.